

# WISCONSIN BOATING REGULATIONS



PUBL-LE-301 2006

Department of Natural Resources  
PO Box 7921  
Madison, WI 53707-7921

## WORKING TO MAKE WISCONSIN'S WATERS SAFE



### The Law Enforcement Mission

*To protect, enhance and promote the safe and wise use of our natural resources, Wisconsin Conservation Wardens shall:*

- Ensure the right of all persons to safely use, share and enjoy Wisconsin's natural resources through firm, fair and effective law enforcement.
- Educate and inform citizens of the responsible use of Wisconsin's natural resources and the application of natural resource laws.
- In partnership with others, educate the public in the safe and responsible use of firearms, boats, snowmobiles and all terrain vehicles.
- Lead the citizens of Wisconsin in maintaining the tradition of ethical use and stewardship of our natural resource.

**Scott Hassett**  
Secretary  
Department of Natural Resources

**Randy Stark**  
Director  
DNR Bureau of Enforcement

**William Engfer**  
Director, Recreation Enforcement

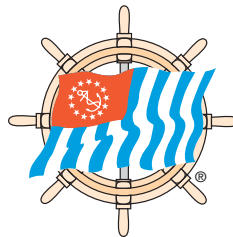
**Roy Zellmer**  
DNR Boating Law Administrator

### Prepare: Take The Wisconsin Boating Safety Course

Boating Safety Education is a positive move toward a safe and enjoyable boating future. Enroll in a Boating Safety Course NOW.

For more information on boating laws and safety courses, call your local DNR Service Center or visit our website at <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/es/enforcement/safety/upcoming.htm>

## Safer Boating through Partnerships



### UNITED STATES POWER SQUADRONS

*Be a Smart Boater . . .  
Increase your Boating Skills!*

**Classes offered throughout the state.  
DNR certified.**

Propulsion Systems ● Boat Handling & Seamanship ● PWC ● Docking ● Lines ● Anchoring ● Trailering ● Required & Recommended Equipment ● Navigation Lights ● Responsibilities ● Aids to Navigation ● Navigation Rules

For more information, call  
**1-888-FOR-USPS**, or  
contact our web site  
**<http://www.USPS.org>**



### UNITED STATES COAST GUARD AUXILIARY

### Educating Wisconsin Boaters *through*

**Boating Courses • Courtesy Vessel Examinations  
Surface and Air Operations**

for more information, call the CG Infoline at 800-368-5647  
Or visit our website at <http://www.cgaux.org>

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Words Defined .....	5
New Law .....	6
Exotic Species.....	7
Why Should I Worry about Boat Sewage? .....	8
Wisconsin's Personal Watercraft Law .....	9
Registration and Titling .....	10
Boat Certificates of Numbers.....	11
Navigation Lights.....	13
Equipment Requirements .....	15
Personal Flotation Devices—PFD's/Life Jackets .....	16
Traffic Rules .....	18
Speed Restrictions.....	19
Age Restrictions.....	19
Prohibited Methods of Operation .....	20
Water Skiing.....	22
Skin Diving .....	23
Accidents.....	23
Distress Signal Flag or Signals.....	23
Throwing Refuse in Waters.....	24
Waterway Markers .....	24
For a Safe Outing.....	26
10 Most Common Boating Violations .....	26
Zone A Sunrise and Sunset times.....	27–28
Timetable Zone Map/DNR Regional Offices .....	29
Homeland Security.....	31
Where Your Boat Registration Dollar Goes .....	32

## WORDS DEFINED

**“Blue Flashing Lights”** means lights displayed by law enforcement officials while on official duty, which require all boaters to yield and stop immediately.

**“Boat”** or vessel means every description of watercraft, other than a seaplane on the water, used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on water, *including sailboards, innertubes, and inflatables*.

**“DNR”** Department of Natural Resources.

**“Intoxicants”** includes alcoholic beverages, controlled substances or other drugs or any combination thereof.

**“Motorboat”** means any boat equipped with propulsion machinery whether in use or not.

**“Operate”** or use when used in reference to a motorboat or vessel means to navigate, employ.

**“Personal Flotation Devices, or PFDs”** means life jackets, ring buoys, and cushions.

**“Personal watercraft, or PWC”** means a motorboat that uses an inboard motor powering a water jet pump or a caged propeller as its primary source of motive power and that is designed to be operated by a person standing on, kneeling on, or sitting astride the watercraft.

**“Readily Accessible”** means located in an area where all passengers of the boat are able to retrieve equipment immediately in an emergency. This means not stored in locked compartments or in other secured areas.

**“Sailboard”** means a sailboat with a hull resembling a surfboard which has little or no cockpit or seating area and which is designed to be sailed by a person in a standing position.

**“S-N-W” or “Slow-no-wake”** means that speed at which a boat moves as slowly as possible while still maintaining steerage control.

**“Serviceable Condition”** means to perform the intended uses and absent of any tears, punctures or other deformations from its original manufactured design.

**“State of Principal Use”** means the state where the boat is used or is to be used most during the year.

## Law Enforcement

Wisconsin *boaters* enjoy one of the finest recreational boating safety programs in the nation. To aid those in distress on our waters and to assure that the requirements of law are obeyed Wisconsin conservation wardens, many county sheriff's departments, municipal police departments and the U.S. Coast Guard have established marine enforcement patrols.

Whenever your boat is approached by an authorized patrol boat displaying **blue lights** you shall reduce the boat speed to slow-no-wake speed and yield the right-of-way to the patrol boat. The operator of a boat shall **stop when requested to by a law enforcement officer** or patrol boat. These officers are charged with the responsibility of providing safety afloat. Law violators can expect enforcement action and conscientious boaters will find these officers helpful protectors of their recreation.

Blue flashing lights are reserved for law enforcement officials only.

**Please Note.** This pamphlet is not a complete set of boating laws. However, it supplies the essential information. Please read it carefully. If you have any questions, contact Department of Natural Resources personnel or your local law enforcement authorities. (See page 29.) In addition, federal regulations require *visual distress signals* and sound producing devices on boats 16 feet and over on federal waterways.

## NEW LAW

The Wisconsin Legislature has recently passed a Mandatory Boating Education bill. This bill requires anyone born on or after 1-1-1989 and at least 16 years of age to have a boating safety education certificate to operate a motorboat on Wisconsin's waterways. This new law will take effect during 2006. Please watch for news releases or the DNR website for exact date of implementation.

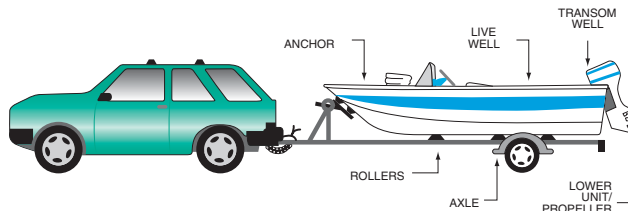
## EXOTIC SPECIES

### Help Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!

Prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species...

Enjoying Wisconsin waters is important to most of us. However, those waters can be threatened by invasive plants and animals that can crowd out our native species and make boating, fishing and swimming more difficult. If you are a water recreationist—boater, angler, water-skier, scuba diver, sailor, or canoeist—there are some important things you can do to prevent the transport of harmful exotic species from one lake or river to another:

- ✓ Inspect your boat, trailer, and equipment and remove visible aquatic plants, animals, and mud before leaving the water access
- ✓ Drain water from your boat, motor, bilge, live wells, and bait containers before leaving the water access
- ✓ Dispose of unwanted bait in the trash
- ✓ Spray/rinse boats and recreational equipment with high pressure and/or hot tap water (> 104° F), especially if moored for more than a day, OR
- ✓ Dry boats and equipment for at least 5 days.



When inspecting your boat for plants and animals, be sure to check the spots labeled in the drawing above.

By taking these simple steps each time you move your boat from one water body to another you are helping to protect our waters for future generations!

**Wisconsin statutes prohibit launching a boat, boat trailer, or boating equipment if there are any aquatic plants or zebra mussels attached.**

Want to check and see if a local lake or river contains invasive species? Visit the following web sites for lists and maps of Wisconsin waters known to contain:

- ✓ **Zebra mussels:** <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/wm/GLWSP/exotics/zebra.html>
- ✓ **Eurasian Water-milfoil:** <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/wm/GLWSP/exotics/milfoil.html>

## WHY SHOULD I WORRY ABOUT BOAT SEWAGE?

No one wants to take a swim where they know there is raw sewage from boats. No one wants to eat fish that could be contaminated. We all hear a lot about pollution in our water, but what can we, as individuals do about that pollution? Properly managing sewage on our boats is something everyone can do right now to help improve local water quality.

Most of the areas where boats congregate—harbors, anchorages, and marinas, are naturally sheltered and semi-enclosed. That means these sheltered areas also are not flushed as well as more open waters. The end result is that any pollution we put there ends up staying there. Bacteria, chemicals, and nutrients contained in human waste from boats can overload small, poorly flushed waterways and cause problems with local water quality.

As we fish, swim, boat, sail, ski, or relax on our boats, we rely on having clean water. In fact, in a recent survey, more than 95% of boaters interviewed said they were concerned about the marine environment. Clean water makes all of our recreational activities more enjoyable, so let's all join in to help clean up our waterways.

It is illegal to dispose of sewage into Wisconsin waterways.

*Clean Boats...Clean Waters*



## WISCONSIN'S PERSONAL WATERCRAFT LAW

Personal Watercraft (PWC) are classified as Class A (less than 16 feet in length) inboard boats. All PWC must be registered and display valid registration decals and registration numbers on the forward half of both sides of the craft and abide by all boating regulations, plus the following specific regulations.

### Synopsis of Wisconsin's Personal Watercraft Law

1. No person may operate a PWC from sunset to sunrise.
2. All persons riding a PWC must wear a PFD of the proper size and type (type I, II, III, or V).
3. No person may operate a PWC equipped by the manufacturer with a lanyard without the lanyard attached to the operator.
  - ✓ No person may sell a PWC manufactured after 1/1/93 unless equipped with a lanyard or self-circling device.
4. No one under 12 may operate a PWC. (Rental age limit is 16.)
5. Persons at least 12 but under 16 must be in possession of a valid, state-approved boating safety student certificate to operate a PWC. (Parental supervision is not a substitute for a boating safety certificate as with other motorboats. PWC operators must have a certificate.)
6. It is illegal to operate a PWC facing backwards.
7. Rental PWC:
  - ✓ No one under 16 may rent a PWC.
  - ✓ Rental agent must provide PFD of proper size and type.
  - ✓ Rental agent must provide renters with instruction on PWC operation unless the renter holds a valid boating safety student certificate or has previous experience operating a PWC.
8. There is no towing of persons engaged in water skiing, aquaplaning, or similar activities *unless* the PWC is designed to seat at least 3 people.
9. PWC towing of stranded or disabled boats is only allowed if speeds do not exceed slow-no-wake.
10. PWC are restricted to a slow-no-wake speed anytime:
  - ✓ the PWC is within 100 feet of any other boat or PWC on any body of water.
  - ✓ the PWC is within 200 feet of the shoreline of any lake.
11. It is illegal to operate a PWC within 100' of the following:
  - ✓ another boat towing a skier or person engaged in similar activity.
  - ✓ the tow rope of another motorboat towing a skier or person engaged in similar activity.
  - ✓ a person involved in skiing or a similar activity.

12. No person operating *any type of motorboat* (including PWC) that is towing persons engaged in water skiing, aquaplaning, or similar activity may operate within 100 feet of any occupied anchored boat, any personal watercraft, any marked swimming area, or public boat landing.
13. No person who is water skiing or engaged in a similar activity, may get within 100 feet of a personal watercraft or allow the tow rope to get within 100 feet of a personal watercraft.

Rules 11 through 13 do not apply to waterski pickup or drop areas that are marked with regulatory markers and that are open to operators of personal watercraft and to persons and motorboats engaged in water skiing.

## REGISTRATION AND TITLING

No person may operate, and no owner may give permission for the operation of any boat unless the boat is covered by a valid certificate of number issued by the Wisconsin DNR unless that boat falls under one of the exemptions listed.

Federally documented boats must be registered in the State of Wisconsin unless they are exempted by law. They shall also display the registration year decal but shall not display a Wisconsin registration number unless the decal is not displayed by the documented name. Then the number and decal shall be displayed as shown on page 12.

### Exemptions From Registration

1. Sailboats 12 feet and under without a motor.
2. Manually propelled boats **not equipped** with a motor or sail.
3. Any boat covered by a valid certificate from another state or federal government and has been within this state not more than 60 consecutive days **unless this state is the state of principal use**.
4. Licensed documented fishing vessels.
5. Sailboards.

A boat present in this state is exempt from registration for a period of 10 days for the express purpose of competing in a race sanctioned by a governmental subdivision.

## BOAT CERTIFICATES OF NUMBERS

- **How to Apply:** Requests for boat registration and/or titling are to be submitted on DNR forms available at [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov), DNR Service Centers and many dealerships.
- **Expiration:** Certificates of numbers or decals are issued for a three-year period commencing April 1 and expiring on March 31.
- **Change of Address:** In order to receive renewal notices, a boat owner who changes residence shall within 15 days notify the DNR of both the old and new address.
- **New at DNR Service Centers:** For an additional \$5.00 counter fee, customer can receive their boat decals at the time they submit their completed registration application.
- **Renewals:** Registration renewals can be submitted on a renewal form, on the application form or online at [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov). The online service is a quick and convenient way to renew registration with a credit card, there is an additional \$1.00 fee. Carry a copy of the application or a printed confirmation from the online service to operate immediately.
- **Transfers:** Transfer of ownership of a boat terminates the certificate of number and title. Upon receipt of the required fee and application, the Department will issue a new certificate of number and/or title for the boat. The purchaser of a boat shall within 10 days and prior to operation make application *on forms furnished by the DNR. The previous owner's certificate and title shall accompany the application.*

A fee shall be paid for the issuance of a certificate of number and/or title by the new owner upon the transfer of ownership of a boat numbered in this state. The certificate shall then be effective for the remainder of the numbering period for which the previous certificate was issued. *After application a person may operate a boat when a copy of the application is carried onboard.*

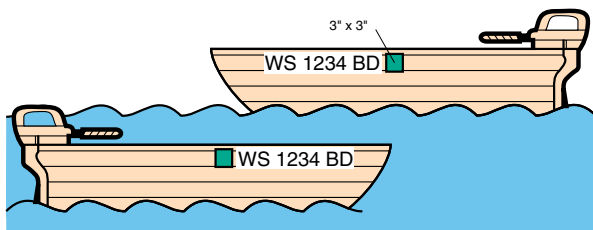
- It is unlawful to transfer the number designated by the DNR from one boat to another.
- **Duplicates:** Duplicate certificates, titles, and decals will be issued for a fee upon the receipt of a proper application stating that the original certificates, titles or decals have been lost or destroyed.
- **Display of Identification Number and Decals:** Upon being issued a certificate of number and decal, the owner of a boat shall display the issued numbers on each side of the forward half of the boat. Once the certificate of number is received, the owner of the boat must purchase adhesive numbers and letters or paint



the numbers and letters on the boat using block letters not less than 3" high and in a contrasting color to the surface on which they are applied. Display the registration number with at least a 2" space or hyphen between the letters and center 4 numbers. It is the responsibility of the owner to be sure that the registration number is clearly visible and maintained in legible condition at all times. Place the registration decal (indicates the date through which the registration is valid) in line with and 3" from the registration number, toward the stern. In Wisconsin, registration expires on March 31 of the year shown on the decal.

- ✓ *Federally documented boats shall display the decals on each side of the name on the transom.*
- ✓ It is unlawful for any other numbers or decals to be painted, attached or otherwise displayed on either side of the forward half of any registered boat.
- ✓ It is unlawful to operate or use any registered boat without having the certificate of number available for inspection at all times on such boat.

- **Commercial Dealer Numbers:** A manufacturer or dealer in boats



may, at the manufacturer or dealer option, pay a fee of \$75 for the issuance or renewal of a certificate of number. This registration number can be used for testing, demonstrating, rental and private use. The number can only be displayed on one boat at any given time. Registration numbers are assigned by DNR and must be displayed on two removable signs attached to the boat while being operated. (Refer to the display specifications above for size and format information.)

- **Abandonment:** The owner of a numbered boat shall notify the DNR within 15 days after a boat has been destroyed or abandoned and shall return the registration certificate to the Department at: DNR-Boat Registration, Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707.

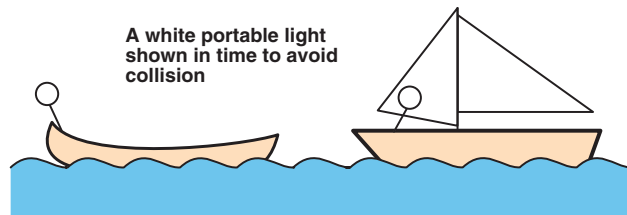
## NAVIGATION LIGHTS

Navigation lights must be on from sunset to sunrise, and during periods of restricted visibility. (See Zone A Sunrise and Sunset Schedule on pages 27–28.)

- **Boat Light Visibility Rules.** White lights must be visible for two miles on a dark, clear night (with one exception under the International Rules). Combination or side lights must be visible for one mile.

Combination or side lights must shine red to port (left side) and green to starboard (right side). They must be attached so the light shows from directly ahead to 225° to the rear of the beam (midpoint of the boat) on the respective side. Lights may be detachable and need only be displayed from sunset to sunrise.

- **Non-motorized Boats.** (see illustration below). All non-motorized watercraft whether underway or at anchor must carry a white lantern or flashlight. This light should be strong enough so that other boats can see it from around the horizon at a distance of two miles or more. The light must be displayed in sufficient time to avoid a collision with another watercraft. (Note: Motorized canoes, kayaks, and sailboats must follow the light rules for motorboats.)

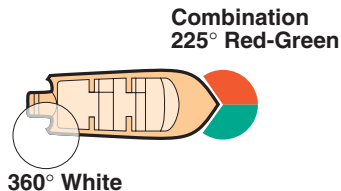


- Every moored, anchored and drifting boat and other fixed and floating structures, outside of designated anchorages or beyond 200 feet from the shoreline shall be lighted from sunset to sunrise by a white light visible all around the horizon. **No other navigation lights may be displayed.**
- **Motorboats.** Most motorboats 16 feet or more in length will be equipped with the correct navigation lights by the manufacturer. In any case, the lights must be displayed according to the state rules described below or under the current federal regulations.

## Option A

When underway, motorboats less than 40 feet long must display:

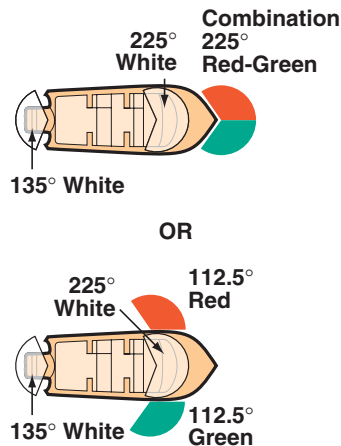
- 1) a 225° combination red and green bow (front) light
- 2) A 360° white stern (rear) light.



## Option B

Motorboats 65 feet or less, when underway, display:

- 1) Either separate 112.5° red and green side lights **or** a combination 225° red and green bow light.
- 2) A 225° white light on the forward half of the boat, placed at least three feet above the red-green lights, showing 112.5° to each side and visible for three miles. On boats 40 to 65 feet long, this light must be at least nine feet above the gunwale.
- 3) A 135° white light on the stern half of the craft showing 67.5° to each side. This light may be carried off the center line. When at anchor, only one 360° white light is necessary.



## EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

It is unlawful for any person to operate any boat unless equipped properly and **no owner shall rent** such boat to any person unless such boat is properly equipped at rental for the existing conditions.

- **Bilge Ventilator:** It is unlawful to operate a boat, except those of open construction, using a liquid volatile fuel unless equipped with an efficient natural or mechanical bilge ventilator.
- **Boat Battery:** It shall be unlawful to operate a motor driven boat equipped with a storage battery unless such battery is secured against shifting. Such batteries shall be equipped with nonconductive terminal shields to prevent accidental shorting of battery terminals. Both positive and negative terminals need to be covered. (Covered battery box with strap works best.)
- **Capacity Plates:** *The majority of boats manufactured or offered for sale in this state shall have affixed thereto a capacity plate. Never exceed the maximum capacity limits of your boat.* To do so is to endanger your life and that of your passengers. It is also accepted evidence that you are operating your boat unlawfully.
- **Fire Extinguisher:** It is unlawful to operate a motorboat, except outboards of open construction, without fire extinguisher of the size, type and number as specified.
  - ✓ "Open construction"—Open construction means boat construction of a type that will not allow the entrapment of explosive or flammable gases or vapors.
  - ✓ Such fire extinguisher shall be kept in condition for immediate and effective use and shall be so placed as to be readily accessible.

### Fire Extinguisher requirements by boat size and class

A	=	Less than 16 ft.	=	1 size B-I
1	=	16 ft., less than 26 ft.	=	1 size B-I
2	=	26 ft., less than 40 ft.	=	2 size B-I or 1 size BII
3	=	40 ft. and over	=	3 size B-I or 1 size BII & 1 B-I

Extinguisher Classes	Foam (Gals.)	CO2 (LBS)	Dry Chemical (LBS)	Halon (LBS)
B-I	1.25	4.0	2.0	2.5
B-II	2.5	15.0	10.0	10.0

- **Flame Arrester:** It is unlawful to operate a gasoline powered inboard boat unless the carburetor is fitted with a Coast Guard approved flame arrester.



- **Mufflers:** No person may operate a motorboat without a muffler or one which exceeds noise level standards (86 db on "A" weighted scale) with a muffler. Operators must submit to testing when requested. Muffler cutout devices are prohibited which allow the noise level to exceed 86 db.
- **Toilets:** It is unlawful to maintain or operate any boat equipped with a toilet on the inland or outlying waters of this state unless such toilet is sealed or otherwise rendered inoperative or meets the specifications of Department of Commerce Adm. Code Comm 86.07. Boat toilet requirements may be obtained from the Safety & Bldgs Division, Dept. of Commerce, PO Box 2658, Madison WI 53701-2658.

## PERSONAL FLotation DEVICES— PFD's/LIFE JACKETS

The operator of every boat must supply the required number and type of approved Personal Flotation Devices that are described below. An approved PFD is one which meets the safety standards established by the U.S. Coast Guard, has a Coast Guard approval stamped or sewn on it, and is in serviceable condition (*ripped, damaged or unserviceable PFD's are not legal*). All PFD's must be readily accessible and wearable Personal Flotation Devices must be the proper size for the intended wearer.

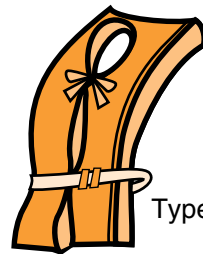
- **Boats:** It is unlawful to operate any boat (including inflatables and innertubes) unless at least one of the following type PFD's of the proper size is available for each person on board:

Type I	}	Wearable Type PFD's
Type II		
Type III		

Type V—Must be worn when boat is underway to be legal

In addition to the above, each boat 16 feet or longer, except canoes and kayaks, must have at least one Type IV PFD—Buoyant cushion or ring buoy on board. The Type IV PFD must be immediately available, that is, within reach of someone on deck while watercraft is underway.

- **Personal Watercraft (PWC):** It is unlawful to operate a PWC unless each person is **wearing** a type I, II, III, or type V personal flotation device.
- **Sailboarders/Wind Surfers:** Are exempt from PFD requirements, but are encouraged to wear one.



Type II

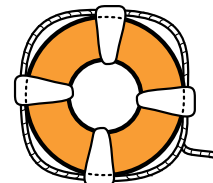


Type III

- **Type I—PFD—Life Preserver**—This is a jacket type worn like a coat and designed to turn an unconscious person's face up in the water.
- **Type II—PFD—Buoyant Vest**—Horse collar type and worn like a bib.
- **Type III—PFD—Special Purpose Device**—Ski vests, fisherman's vest, float-coats. Will not hold an unconscious person's face out of the water.



Type IV  
cushion



Type IV  
Ring  
Buoy

- **Type IV—PFD—Buoyant Cushion, Ring Buoy**—These are throwable devices and are not designed to be worn.
- **Type V—Special Use Devices**—A Coast Guard approved Type V PFD may be carried in lieu of a Type I-III PFD, if the Type V device is approved for the activity in which the craft is being used. (Note: Type V devices are approved for specific and restricted uses and may have to be worn to be approved.)

## Inflatable PFD's

Inflatable PFD's come in Types I, II, and III. Although the different "Types" of inflatable PFD's are intended for use in the same areas as inherently buoyant types of PFD's, the characteristics of inflatable PFD's are different. Inflatable PFD's are not inherently buoyant and will not float without inflation. For Types I, II, and III inflatables, the lower the type number, the better the PFD's performance (e.g., Type I is better than Type II).

Although inflatable PFD's are considered one of the most comfortable PFD's to wear when it's hot, inflatable PFD's require regular maintenance and are not recommended for children or individuals who can't swim. Inflatable PFD's are not for use where water impact is expected as when waterskiing, riding personal watercraft, or whitewater paddling.

**Federal PFD Wear Regulation for Children:** Federal regulations now require that children under 13 years of age (that are not in a cabin or below deck) must wear a PFD on all recreational boats while underway. This applies on waters subject to federal jurisdiction.

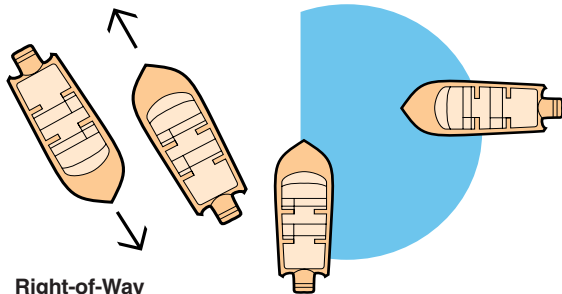
## Drowning as a result of capsizing and falls overboard is the leading cause of boating fatalities in Wisconsin.

*Wearing your PFD is your best defense against drowning.*

### TRAFFIC RULES

#### Meeting

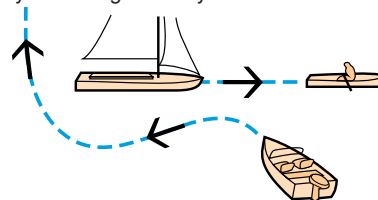
When 2 motorboats are approaching each other head-on or nearly so as to involve risk of collision, each boat shall bear to the right and pass the other boat on its left side.



#### Right-of-Way

When 2 motorboats are approaching each other at right angles or in a crossing situation, the boat on the right is the privileged boat and has the right-of-way. The boat on the left shall slow and/or change course to cross behind the privileged boat to avoid collision.

When a motorboat and a boat propelled entirely by sail or muscle-power are proceeding in such a direction as to involve risk of collision, the motorboat shall yield the right-of-way.



#### Overtaking

A boat may overtake and pass another boat on either side if it can be done with safety, but the overtaking boat shall always yield the right-of-way to the boat being overtaken.

A boat granted the right-of-way shall maintain its course and speed, unless to do so would possibly result in a collision.

### SPEED RESTRICTIONS

- It is unlawful to operate a motorboat within 100 feet of any dock, raft, pier, or buoyed restricted area on any lake at a speed in excess of "slow-no-wake."
- Motorboats may not be operated at a speed greater than "slow-no-wake" on lakes 50 acres or less having public access, except when such lakes serve as thoroughfares between 2 or more navigable lakes.
- It is unlawful to operate a motorboat at a speed that is greater than reasonable and prudent under the existing conditions. The speed shall be so controlled as to avoid colliding with any object, person or conveyance lawfully in or on the water.
- It is unlawful to create hazardous wakes.

### AGE RESTRICTIONS

- No person under the age of 10 years may operate a motorboat.
- No person under 12 may operate a personal watercraft (PWC).
- Persons at least 10 but less than 16 years of age may operate a motorboat (except PWC) only if they are accompanied by a parent or guardian or by a person 18 years or older designated by the parent or guardian, or if they are 12 years of age but less than 16 years of age and have successfully completed a Department of Natural Resources prescribed Boating Safety Course and possess a safety certificate issued by the Department or another state.

- No person under the age of 16 may rent a personal watercraft.
- Persons at least 12 years of age may operate a personal watercraft (PCW) if they have successfully completed a DNR prescribed Boating Safety Course and possess a safety certificate issued by the Department or another state.
- Person born on or after 1-1-1989 and at least 16 years of age must have successfully completed a DNR prescribed Boating Safety Course and possess a safety certificate issued by the Department, another state, or Canadian Province.
- Parents or guardians are punishable by law for knowingly allowing unauthorized persons to operate a motorboat.

**Note: "Accompanied," for the purposes of these regulations, means "aboard the same boat."**

## PROHIBITED METHODS OF OPERATION

### *It is unlawful:*

- To operate a motorboat or use water skis, aquaplane or similar device while under the influence of an intoxicant or a controlled substance or with a blood alcohol concentration of .08% or higher. The use of intoxicants impairs a boat operator's senses and judgement. Intoxicants are related to 30% of all boating accidents. In Wisconsin, all motor boat operators are deemed to have given consent to a blood alcohol test.
- To fail to stop for duly authorized patrol boat displaying a blue light or requesting you to stop by any other method.
- To operate or use any boat, or manipulate any water skis, aquaplane or

BOATERS—Did You Know?										BLOOD ALCOHOL %
NUMBER OF DRINKS*	100	120	140	160	180	200	220	240		BOAT OPERATION
1	.04	.03	.03	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02		Impaired
2	.08	.06	.05	.05	.04	.04	.03	.03		
3	.11	.09	.08	.07	.06	.06	.05	.05		
4	.15	.12	.11	.09	.08	.08	.07	.06		May be Under the Influence
5	.19	.16	.13	.12	.11	.09	.09	.08		
6	.23	.19	.16	.14	.13	.11	.10	.09		
7	.26	.22	.19	.16	.15	.13	.12	.11		Absolutely Do Not Operate
8	.30	.25	.21	.19	.17	.15	.14	.13		
9	.34	.28	.24	.21	.19	.17	.15	.14		
10	.38	.31	.27	.23	.21	.19	.17	.16		

\* Subtract .015% for each hour of drinking.  
(1 glass wine = 1 bottle of beer = 1 highball)

similar device in a careless, negligent, or reckless manner so as to endanger his or her life, property or the life, property or person of another.

- For any person in charge or control of a boat to authorize or permit the boat to be operated by any person who is knowingly physically or mentally incapable of operating such boat under the prevailing circumstances.
- To operate a motorboat repeatedly in a circuitous course within 200 feet around any other boat or around any person who is swimming.
- For any boat or water skier to operate or approach closer than 100 feet to any skin diver's flag or any swimmer unless the boat is part of the skin diving operation or is accompanying the swimmer.
- While operating a motorboat to allow any person to ride or sit on the gunwales, tops of seats, backs or sides or on the decking over the bow while under way, unless such person is inboard of guards or railings provided on the boat to prevent passengers from being lost overboard, except for anchoring, mooring or casting off.
- It is further recommended that on fishing boats (i.e. bass boats etc.) with carpeted decks, no person remain on the carpeted deck when the boat is moving faster than idle speed. Use only permanently attached, true seats.
- To operate a boat within an area clearly marked in accordance with law by buoys or some other distinguishing device as a bathing or swimming area or other restricted use area, except in the case of emergency or to patrol or rescue craft.
- To move, remove, molest, tamper with, destroy or attempt to destroy or moor or fasten a boat (except to mooring buoys) to any navigation aids or regulatory markers.
- To anchor, place, affix or abandon any unattended boat, raft, float or similar structure in the traveled portion of any river, channel, or in any traffic lane established and legally marked, so as to prevent, impede or interfere with safe passage of any other boat through the same.
- To operate any boat beyond the safe carrying capacity of passengers or cargo or to equip a boat with propulsion in excess of its safe power capacity, taking into consideration existing operating conditions.
- To unnecessarily sound any sound-producing device on any boat, or to use a siren except on authorized patrol boats.
- **To operate contrary to any legally posted municipal boating ordinances.**

## WATER SKIING

### ***It is unlawful:***

- To operate a motorboat towing a person whether or not on water skis, aquaplane, parasail or similar device, unless there *is in the boat* a competent person in addition to the operator in a position to observe the activity of the person being towed. The observer must be able to observe the person being towed and relay signals to the operator.
- To engage in water skiing, aquaplaning or similar activity from sunset to sunrise. (See pages 25–27 for sunrise/sunset tables.)
- To operate a motorboat having a person in tow on water skis, aquaplane or similar device other than in a careful and prudent manner and at a reasonable and safe distance from persons or property.
- To operate a boat towing persons engaged in water skiing, aquaplaning, parasailing or similar activity within 100 feet of any occupied anchored boat, any personal watercraft, or marked swimming area or public boat landing, except where pick-up and drop areas are established and marked with regulatory markers.
- To operate a personal watercraft towing a person on waterskis, aquaplane, or similar device unless the personal watercraft is designed to seat at least 3 persons.
- For a person engaged in water skiing, aquaplaning or similar activity to get within 100 feet of a personal watercraft or allow the tow rope while in use to get within 100 feet of a personal watercraft.

**Note: Local ordinances may be more restrictive for some activities. Inquire through local boat patrol or municipality.**

## SKIN DIVING

- It is unlawful to engage in underwater skin diving or swimming with use of swimming fins outside a marked swim area or beyond 150 feet from shore unless the location of such swimming or diving is marked by a diver's flag.
- It is unlawful to scuba dive outside a marked swim area unless the location of the scuba diving is marked by a diver's flag.
- Except in case of emergency, anyone engaged in such swimming or diving shall not rise to the surface outside of 50 feet from diver's flag.



- The diver's flag shall not be less than 12 inches high and 15 inches long, displaying one diagonal white stripe 3 inches wide on a red background and must be clearly apparent at a distance of 100 yards.
- No person diving or swimming shall interfere with someone engaged in fishing.
- No person shall dive or swim in any established navigation lane.

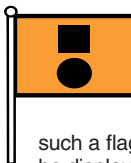
## ACCIDENTS

- The operator of any boat involved in a boating accident must render assistance to the persons affected.

**Accident Reporting**—When a boating accident results in death or injury to any person or total damage in excess of \$2,000 to boats or other property, every operator of a boat involved in such accident shall without delay and by the quickest means available, give notice of the accident to a conservation warden or local law enforcement officer and shall file a written report within 10 days on DNR form 4100-20 to DNR-Boat Safety, Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707.

When the operator of a boat is physically incapable of making the report, and there is another occupant of the boat at the time of the accident capable of making a report, the occupant shall make such report on form 4100-20, "Operator Boating Accident Report," which is available from law enforcement agencies.

## DISTRESS SIGNAL FLAG OR SIGNALS



When observing a boat or person displaying a distress signal showing that such a person or boat is in need of help, it is the duty of any boat operator observing such a flag or signal to stop and render aid. No such signal shall be displayed unless assistance is needed.

## THROWING REFUSE IN WATERS

- It is unlawful to leave, deposit, place, or throw on the waters, ice, shores of water or upon public or private property any cans, bottles, debris, refuse, solid waste material or fish parts.

## WATERWAY MARKERS

All official waterway markers (signs, buoys, lights, etc.) are designed to assist the boater by marking unsafe areas, directing traffic through safe channels, preventing accidents, and protecting resources. Honor them—they have been placed for your benefit.

- Placement of all buoys or markers: It is unlawful to place any aids, markers or buoys on shore or in the waters of this state unless authorized by the political subdivision or municipality having jurisdiction. They in turn must obtain the necessary approvals from the Department of Natural Resources and any Federal Agencies concerned before the aid is placed.

### Channel Marker Buoys

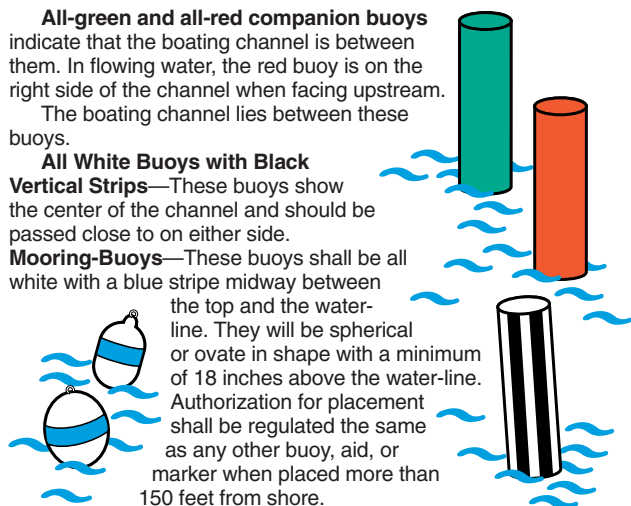
**All-green and all-red companion buoys** indicate that the boating channel is between them. In flowing water, the red buoy is on the right side of the channel when facing upstream.

The boating channel lies between these buoys.

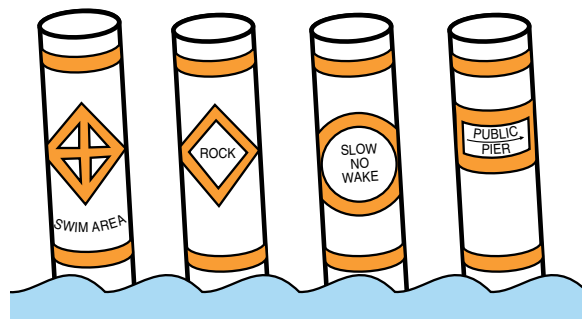
#### All White Buoys with Black Vertical Strips

—These buoys show the center of the channel and should be passed close to on either side.

**Mooring-Buoys**—These buoys shall be all white with a blue stripe midway between the top and the water-line. They will be spherical or ovate in shape with a minimum of 18 inches above the water-line. Authorization for placement shall be regulated the same as any other buoy, aid, or marker when placed more than 150 feet from shore.



## Regulatory Buoys and Signs



Restriction

Danger

Controlled  
Area

Informational

**Restriction.** A white buoy or sign with an **orange diamond and cross** means that boats must keep out of the area. Black lettering on the buoy or sign gives the reason for the restriction, for example, SWIM AREA.

**Danger.** A white buoy or sign with an **orange diamond** warns boaters of danger — rocks, dams, rapids, etc. The source of danger will also be lettered in black. In winter, ice hazards may also be identified with this marker in the form of a sign.

**Controlled Area.** A white buoy or sign with an **orange circle** indicates controlled or restricted areas on the water, such as slow-no-wake zones. Information on the specific restriction will be lettered in black.

**Informational.** A white buoy or sign with an **orange rectangle** provides the boater with information or directions. Information will be lettered in black.

## FOR A SAFE OUTING

1. Keep an alert lookout.
2. It is recommended that all occupants of any boat, or at least children and nonswimmers, wear an approved personal flotation device.
3. Obey rules of the road.
4. If the boat capsizes but floats—stay with it.
5. Keep away from immediately above and below locks and dams, especially on the Mississippi River where “no entry” areas are established. Obey the U.S. Corps of Engineers signs.
6. Wisconsin weather has a habit of changing radically in a short period of time. These changes are almost always forecast well in advance by the weather bureau and warnings issued.

### Make Wisconsin Waters Safer



**Report Boating Violations** call your local law enforcement agency (warden, sheriff, or police department), or call 1-800-TIP-WDNR to report violations.

## 10 MOST COMMON BOATING VIOLATIONS

1. Fail to provide proper number of personal flotation devices
2. Personal Watercraft violations
3. Operate boat without valid certificate of number
4. Operate boat in prohibited area, in excess of speed limit on lakes 50 acres or less, or in excess of fixed limits
5. Operate motorboat while under influence of an intoxicant, or operating motorboat with BAC of 0.08% or greater
6. Operate boat at night without required lights
7. Fail to display registration number or decal on boat
8. Operate boat towing waterskiers without an observer
9. Operate boat beyond slow-no-wake where prohibited
10. Permit underage operation of boat

## 2005 SUNRISE AND SUNSET SCHEDULE NORTHERN ZONE “A” TABLE APRIL–OCTOBER

	April		May		June		July		August		Sept		Oct	
Day	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
1	5:30	6:17	5:39	7:55	5:07	8:28	5:07	8:39	5:35	8:16	6:12	7:26	6:47	6:30
2	6:29	7:18	5:38	7:56	5:06	8:29	5:08	8:39	5:36	8:14	6:13	7:25	6:49	6:28
3	6:27	7:20	5:36	7:57	5:06	8:30	5:08	8:39	5:38	8:13	6:14	7:23	6:50	6:26
4	6:25	7:21	5:35	7:58	5:05	8:31	5:09	8:38	5:39	8:12	6:15	7:21	6:51	6:25
5	6:23	7:22	5:34	8:00	5:05	8:32	5:10	8:38	5:40	8:10	6:16	7:19	6:52	6:23
6	6:21	7:23	5:32	8:01	5:04	8:32	5:10	8:38	5:41	8:09	6:18	7:17	6:54	6:21
7	6:19	7:25	5:31	8:02	5:04	8:33	5:11	8:37	5:42	8:08	6:19	7:15	6:55	6:19
8	6:18	7:26	5:30	8:03	5:04	8:34	5:12	8:37	5:43	8:06	6:20	7:13	6:56	6:17
9	6:16	7:27	5:28	8:04	5:04	8:34	5:13	8:36	5:44	8:05	6:21	7:12	6:57	6:15
10	6:14	7:28	5:27	8:06	5:03	8:35	5:13	8:36	5:46	8:03	6:22	7:10	6:59	6:14
11	6:12	7:30	5:26	8:07	5:03	8:35	5:14	8:35	5:47	8:02	6:23	7:08	7:00	6:12
12	6:10	7:31	5:25	8:08	5:03	8:36	5:15	8:35	5:48	8:00	6:25	7:06	7:01	6:10
13	6:09	7:32	5:23	8:09	5:03	8:36	5:16	8:34	5:49	7:59	6:26	7:04	7:02	6:08
14	6:07	7:33	5:22	8:10	5:03	8:37	5:17	8:33	5:50	7:57	6:27	7:02	7:04	6:07
15	6:05	7:35	5:21	8:11	5:03	8:37	5:18	8:33	5:52	7:56	6:28	7:00	7:05	6:05
16	6:03	7:36	5:20	8:12	5:03	8:38	5:19	8:32	5:53	7:54	6:29	6:58	7:06	6:03
17	6:02	7:37	5:19	8:14	5:03	8:38	5:20	8:31	5:54	7:52	6:31	6:57	7:08	6:01
18	6:00	7:38	5:18	8:15	5:03	8:38	5:20	8:30	5:55	7:51	6:32	6:55	7:09	6:00
19	5:58	7:40	5:17	8:16	5:03	8:39	5:21	8:30	5:56	7:49	6:33	6:53	7:10	5:58
20	5:57	7:41	5:16	8:17	5:03	8:39	5:22	8:29	5:57	7:47	6:34	6:51	7:11	5:56
21	5:55	7:42	5:15	8:18	5:03	8:39	5:23	8:28	5:59	7:46	6:35	6:49	7:13	5:55
22	5:53	7:43	5:14	8:19	5:04	8:39	5:24	8:27	6:00	7:44	6:37	6:47	7:14	5:53
23	5:52	7:45	5:13	8:20	5:04	8:39	5:25	8:26	6:01	7:42	6:38	6:45	7:15	5:52
24	5:50	7:46	5:12	8:21	5:04	8:40	5:27	8:25	6:02	7:41	6:39	6:43	7:17	5:50
25	5:49	7:47	5:11	8:22	5:05	8:40	5:28	8:24	6:03	7:39	6:40	6:41	7:18	5:48
26	5:47	7:48	5:11	8:23	5:05	8:40	5:29	8:23	6:05	7:37	6:41	6:39	7:19	5:47
27	5:45	7:50	5:10	8:24	5:05	8:40	5:30	8:22	6:06	7:35	6:43	6:38	7:21	5:45
28	5:44	7:51	5:09	8:25	5:06	8:40	5:31	8:20	6:07	7:34	6:44	6:36	7:22	5:44
29	5:42	7:52	5:08	8:26	5:06	8:40	5:32	8:19	6:08	7:32	6:45	6:34	6:23	5:42
30	5:41	7:53	5:08	8:27	5:07	8:39	5:33	8:18	6:09	7:30	6:46	6:32	6:25	5:41
31			5:07	8:28			5:34	8:17	6:10	7:28			6:26	5:39

Display your navigation lights between sunset and sunrise.

\* Note: Please adjust times, based on map on page 29.



# 2005 BOATING SUNRISE/SUNSET TABLE

## SOUTHERN ZONE "A" TABLE

### APRIL–OCTOBER

Day	April		May		June		July		August		Sept		Oct	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
1	5:34	6:17	5:46	7:51	5:16	8:22	5:18	8:33	5:43	8:11	6:16	7:26	6:48	6:33
2	6:32	7:18	5:45	7:53	5:16	8:23	5:18	8:33	5:44	8:10	6:17	7:24	6:50	6:31
3	6:30	7:20	5:44	7:54	5:16	8:24	5:19	8:32	5:45	8:09	6:18	7:22	6:51	6:29
4	6:29	7:21	5:42	7:55	5:15	8:25	5:19	8:32	5:46	8:08	6:19	7:21	6:52	6:28
5	6:27	7:22	5:41	7:56	5:15	8:25	5:20	8:32	5:47	8:07	6:20	7:19	6:53	6:26
6	6:27	7:23	5:40	7:57	5:14	8:26	5:20	8:32	5:49	8:05	6:22	7:17	6:54	6:24
7	6:24	7:24	5:38	7:58	5:14	8:27	5:21	8:31	5:50	8:04	6:23	7:15	6:55	6:22
8	6:22	7:25	5:37	7:59	5:14	8:27	5:22	8:31	5:51	8:03	6:24	7:14	6:56	6:21
9	6:20	7:26	5:36	8:00	5:14	8:28	5:23	8:30	5:52	8:01	6:25	7:12	6:57	6:19
10	6:18	7:28	5:35	8:01	5:14	8:28	5:23	8:30	5:53	8:00	6:26	7:10	6:59	6:17
11	6:17	7:29	5:34	8:02	5:13	8:29	5:24	8:29	5:54	7:59	6:27	7:08	7:00	6:16
12	6:15	7:30	5:33	8:03	5:13	8:29	5:25	8:29	5:55	7:57	6:28	7:06	7:01	6:14
13	6:13	7:31	5:31	8:05	5:13	8:30	5:26	8:28	5:56	7:56	6:29	7:05	7:02	6:12
14	6:12	7:32	5:30	8:06	5:13	8:30	5:26	8:28	5:57	7:54	6:30	7:03	7:03	6:11
15	6:10	7:33	5:29	8:07	5:13	8:31	5:27	8:27	5:58	7:53	6:31	7:01	7:04	6:09
16	6:09	7:34	5:28	8:08	5:13	8:31	5:28	8:26	5:59	7:51	6:32	6:59	7:06	6:08
17	6:07	7:36	5:27	8:09	5:13	8:31	5:29	8:26	6:00	7:50	6:33	6:58	7:07	6:06
18	6:05	7:37	5:26	8:10	5:13	8:32	5:30	8:25	6:01	7:48	6:34	6:56	7:08	6:04
19	6:04	7:38	5:26	8:11	5:13	8:32	5:31	8:24	6:02	7:47	6:35	6:54	7:09	6:03
20	6:02	7:39	5:25	8:12	5:14	8:32	5:32	8:23	6:03	7:45	6:36	6:52	7:10	6:01
21	6:01	7:40	5:24	8:13	5:14	8:33	5:32	8:23	6:04	7:44	6:38	6:51	7:12	6:00
22	5:59	7:41	5:23	8:14	5:14	8:33	5:33	8:22	6:06	7:42	6:39	6:49	7:13	5:58
23	5:58	7:42	5:22	8:15	5:14	8:33	5:34	8:21	6:07	7:41	6:40	6:47	7:14	5:57
24	5:56	7:44	5:21	8:16	5:15	8:33	5:35	8:20	6:08	7:39	6:41	6:45	7:15	5:55
25	5:55	7:45	5:21	8:16	5:15	8:33	5:36	8:19	6:09	7:37	6:42	6:43	7:16	5:54
26	5:53	7:46	5:20	8:17	5:15	8:33	5:37	8:18	6:10	7:36	6:43	6:42	7:18	5:52
27	5:52	7:47	5:19	8:18	5:16	8:33	5:38	8:17	6:11	7:34	6:44	6:40	7:19	5:51
28	5:50	7:48	5:19	8:19	5:16	8:33	5:39	8:16	6:12	7:32	6:45	6:38	7:20	5:50
29	5:49	7:49	5:18	8:20	5:17	8:33	5:40	8:15	6:13	7:31	6:46	6:36	6:21	4:48
30	5:48	7:50	5:17	8:21	5:17	8:33	5:41	8:14	6:14	7:29	6:47	6:35	6:23	4:47
31			5:17	8:22			5:42	8:13	6:15	7:27			6:24	4:46

Display your navigation lights between sunset and sunrise.

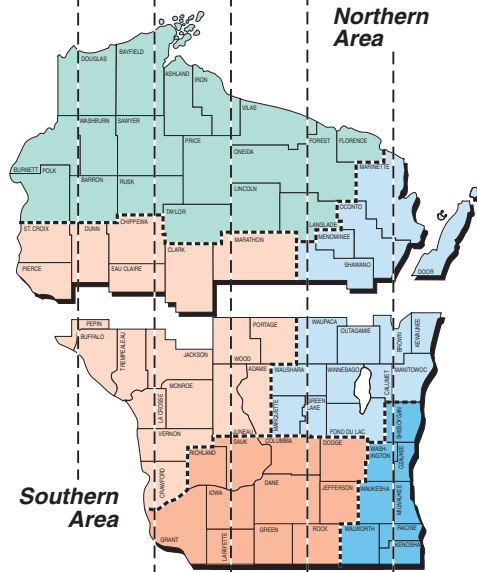
## TV Show for Kids

*Into the Outdoors* is DNR's Emmy Award winning TV show for kids. The half-hour program is hosted by kids who use the Internet to find other kids their age doing outdoor activities and learning about the environment. The show is linked to *EEK!*, DNR's web site for kids, and airs on weekend mornings. See local TV listings for times and stations.



Use this map to adjust sunrise/sunset times:

Zone F + 20 min.    Zone E + 16 min.    Zone D + 12 min.    Zone C + 8 min.    Zone B + 4 min.    Zone A in table



## YOUR REGION DNR OFFICE FOR BOATING QUESTIONS

- Northeast Region**  
2984 Shawano Ave.  
Box 10448  
Green Bay, WI 54307  
920-662-5100
- Southeast Region**  
2300 N. Dr. Martin  
Luther King Jr. Dr.  
Milwaukee, WI 53212  
414-263-8500
- Northern Region**  
107 Sulliff Ave.  
Box 818  
Rhineland, WI 54501  
715-365-8900
- South Central Region**  
3911 Fish Hatchery Rd.  
Fitchburg, WI 53711  
608-275-3266
- Northern Region**  
810 W. Maple St.  
Spooner, WI 54801  
715-635-2101
- West Central Region**  
1300 W. Clairemont Ave.  
Box 4001  
Eau Claire, WI 54702  
715-839-3700



### HOMELAND SECURITY

Due to heightened national security please note the following: On some occasions you may encounter US Naval ships on the great lakes. You must stay at least 100 yards away from these vessels and operate at S-N-W within 500 yards. Avoid all commercial ships (foreign and domestic) and port areas on the great lakes. Observe restricted areas near power plants, dams, bridges anywhere in the state and avoid anchoring near them. Report any suspicious activity immediately by calling 911 or use the marine radio for contacting the U.S. Coast Guard, state or local law enforcement officers.

# WHERE YOUR BOAT REGISTRATION DOLLAR GOES

- **State Enforcement**—Money used to:
  - ✓ Conduct boating enforcement and recordkeeping
  - ✓ Administer and conduct statewide boat accident investigation and recordkeeping program
  - ✓ Administer and provide training and support to municipal water patrols
  - ✓ Boat theft investigation
- **Education Classes**—Money used to administer and conduct statewide boating education program.
- **Municipal Enforcement Aids**—Money reimbursed to local municipalities to pay for cost of municipal boat patrols.
- **Registration/Titling**—Money used to operate the boat licensing/titling/lien program.
- **Administrative-Overhead**—Money used to:
  - ✓ Pay for non-direct related services (general secretarial and operating costs of the department)
  - ✓ Administer State/Federal agreements regarding waterway markers, enforcement, accident investigation
- **Safety/Markers/Ordinance**—Money used to:
  - ✓ Administer and conduct statewide boating safety program (billboards, placemats, TV/radio/newspaper, public information talks, public service announcements, media campaigns, boat regulations, etc.)
  - ✓ Administer and conduct waterway marker program
  - ✓ Administer and conduct municipal ordinance program

This publication is available upon request in alternate formats for visually impaired persons. Please contact Roy Zellmer at (608) 264-8970 to request an alternate format.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunity in its employment, programs, services and functions under an Affirmative Action Plan. If you have any questions, please write to: Equal Opportunity Office, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240



JG



PRINTED ON  
RECYCLED  
PAPER